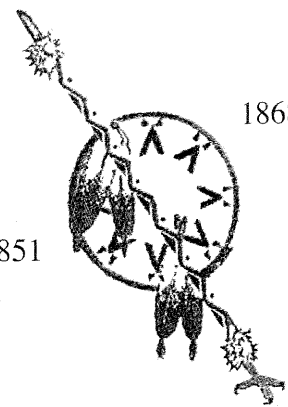


Oglala Sioux Tribe

Office of the President

PO Box 2070
Pine Ridge, SD 57770
Phone: 605.867.5821
Fax: 605.867.6076
E-mail: johns@oglala.org

1851



1868

John Yellow Bird Steele

**STATEMENT OF CLARENCE WOLF GUTS
OGLALA SIOUX TRIBAL MEMBER AND WORLD WAR II VETERAN
BEFORE THE UNITED STATE SENATE COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS**

**OVERSIGHT HEARING ON THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF
NATIVE AMERICAN CODE TALKERS IN AMERICAN MILITARY HISTORY**

SEPTEMBER 22, 2004

Chairman Nighthorse Campbell and honorable members of the Committee on Indian Affairs, my name is Clarence Wolf Guts. I am an enrolled member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe and a World War II Sioux Code Talker.

I first want to thank the Committee on Indian Affairs for holding this oversight hearing on the recognition of the invaluable contributions of Native American Code Talkers in American military history.

I grew up on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation at Wanblee, South Dakota. I attended Catholic school and spoke Lakota as a first language at home.

When I was 18 years old, my cousin Iver Crow Eagle, Sr., a member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, and I enlisted in the United States Army. This was a few months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. I thought I would not pass my physical exam because I had a perforated eardrum, but I was wrong and Iver and I found ourselves in Ranger Training in Alabama.

During Ranger Training, an officer asked Iver and I if we spoke Indian. When he found out that both of us could speak, read and write the Lakota language, he said "oh boy, I hit the jackpot."

I was eventually assigned to travel with a General in the Pacific Theater, and my cousin Iver Crow Eagle was assigned as a radio operator for a Colonel.

For the next three years, Iver and I jumped from one Pacific Island to the next, pushing the Japanese back. During this time, we helped in the development of a phonetic alphabet based on the Lakota language, that was later used to develop a Lakota Code.

Our own families would not have been able to understand the code; only we code talkers could understand the code.

The Lakota Code was used to transmit strategic military messages that helped win World War II. It was a code that the Japanese could not break.

The war against the Japanese was hell. When I was in a foxhole, I prayed for all I was worth. With bullets flying all over, I wanted to come home to the United States and be with my family and the people, the people of America. I did all I could to possibly shorten the war. I was a Pfc. when I got my honorable discharge from the Army on January 13, 1946.

I am thankful that the Federal Government and public in general are finally recognizing the valuable contributions of the Native American Code Talkers during WWI and WWII. I want to personally thank all the Native American Code Talkers for the contributions to winning WWI and WWII.

I also want to personally thank and recognize the following Sioux Code Talkers from WWI and WWII for their contributions in WWI and WWII:

Eddie Eagle Boy and Phillip "Stoney" LaBlanc of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe;

Edmund St. John of the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe;

Willie Iron Elk Plucks Porcupine A/K/A Willie Iron Elk of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe;

Baptiste Pumpkinseed of the Oglala Sioux Tribe;

Simon Broken Leg, Iver Crow Eagle, Sr., and Charlie Whitepipe of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe;

Walter C. John of the Santee Sioux Tribe of Nebraska;

Guy Rondell of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribe; and

John Bear King of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.

Thank you and may the Great Spirit bless all of you.

I understand that there are two Yankton Sioux WWI Code Talkers. I do not know their names, but I also want to recognize them for the contributions to the Allied victory in WWI.

In conclusion, I would like to state that I join with President John Steele in supporting S. 540, a bill "to authorize the presentation of gold medals on behalf of the Congress to Native Americans who served as Code Talkers during foreign conflicts in which the United States was involved during the 20th century in recognition of the service of those Native Americans to the United States." This bill was introduced by Senator Inhofe of Oklahoma, and is co-sponsored by Senators Tom Daschle and Tim Johnson of South Dakota.

I want to thank this honorable committee for allowing me to testify at this very important oversight hearing on the contributions of the Sioux Code Talkers in American military history.